

Turkmen Carpet Museum

The **Turkmen Carpet Museum** or the **National Carpet Museum** is a national museum, situated on 5 Gorogly Street in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

The museum opened on 24 October 1994.^[1] It has the largest collection of Turkmen carpets of any museum.^[2] It has a rich collection of Turkmen carpets from the medieval through to the 20th century,^[3] including over 1000 carpets from the 18th and 19th centuries.^{[4][5]} Aside from its extensive collection of antique carpets, it has many carpet articles, chuvals, khurjuns, torba etc.^[6]

On the first floor of the museum are Tekke and Sarik carpets. The museum is noted for its huge Tekke carpets. One Tekke carpet measures 193m² and weighs a metric tonne and was made by some 40 people in 1941 to make a curtain for the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.^{[6][7]} Another, made in 2001, is even larger, measuring 301m² and 14 by 21.2 metres and was made to commemorate 10 years of Turkmen independence from the Soviet Union.^[8] It is recognised by the Guinness World Records as the largest hand-woven carpet in the world.^[7] One carpet, made in 1968, is representative of all the tribes in Turkmenistan, fusing together the different styles to display unity. The museum also has carpets dedicated to President Niyazov.^[7] Some of the carpets on display are two-sided, often featuring different design on each side.^[9]

Institutional authority

The carpet museum is also recognized by the Turkmen government as the official authority on Turkmen carpets.^[10] Although many carpets are bought from the museum shop or factory,^[6] charging M15,000 per square meter of carpet, depending on the carpet quality, many are bought in the extensive Tolkuchka Bazaar on the city outskirts. If anybody in Turkmenistan purchases a carpet and wants to export it, experts from the Carpet Museum must inspect it and issue a receipt confirming that the carpet is not of historical value, to allow it to be exported from Turkmenistan.^[10] Usually there are restrictions on exporting carpets older than 30 years old and if it is determined that the carpet has historical value, then a receipt for export will not be given.^{[11][10]} This policy restriction on exporting carpets is not only an obligation for tourists but Turkmen citizens also must have their carpets inspected. This has had a profound impact on entrepreneurs in Turkmenistan who find it difficult to develop their businesses internationally.^[12]



The largest hand-woven carpet in the world at the museum

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